

## **Truancy and the Student and Family Education Court**

Attending class on a regular basis is fundamental to a student's progress and academic success. Parents and/or guardians receive notices as their child accumulates unexcused absents. The Student and Family Education Court was created to assist parents/guardians and students with absent issues before they can lead to more complicated difficulties. After six unexcused absents, an invitation is sent to the parents or guardians to join the Student and Family Court voluntary program. The program is a seventeen week program which monitors the student's school attendance and reinforces positively progress made in issues that could hinder attendance. The program is a pro-active, truancy intervention which addresses missed time before the student reaches nine unexcused absents. After nine unexcused absents, the school is obligated to submit the child's case to formal court, with all the legal repercussions that go with it.

The Student and Family Education Court is held on Tuesdays 9:15 to 9:45 am. This allows the student to attend the program, but miss only about 15 minutes of class time. The student, his/her parent(s) or guardian(s), the Community Resource Center representative, school administrator (typically the principal) and Department of Child Services representative attend the court, presided by Judge Erica Sanders.

The program will review the child's weekly progress report (teacher feedback), attendance, grades and issues that could have an impact on his/her attendance. The program is set up for weekly court for the first twelve weeks and a bi-weekly or monthly court for the last seven weeks. After the seventeen week program has been completed